

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 264200

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT MANAMA 01681 ACTION SECSTATE, SECDEF, CNO,
CINCUSNAVEUR, COMIDEASTFOR, SANA DTD 24 OCT 76.

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1681

EXDIS/MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR

SANA PLEASE PASS DEPSEC CLEMENT'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, MASS, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : DEPSEC CLEMENTS' MEETING WITH GOB OFFICIALS

1. SUMMARY: IN OCT. 24 MEETING WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
CLEMENTS, GOB HIERARCHY SAID IT HAD "NOTHING NEW" TO SAY ON
MIDEASTFOR TENURE AT THIS TIME. FOREIGN MINISTER, SPEAKING
FOR GOB, FORCEFULLY STATED HIS OBJECTIONS TO EXTENSION OF
TENURE. AMIR, HOWEVER, STATED THAT "DISCUSSIONS" WILL CONTINUE
WITH AMBASSADOR. HEIR APPARENT/MINISTER OF DEFENSE EXPRESSED
KEEN INTEREST IN MILITARY EQUIPMENT (SEPTTEL) WITH F-5'S AT
TOP OF LIST. END SUMMARY.

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2. DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS AND PARTY HAD FRANK ONE HOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ENTIRE HIERARCHY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN AND RULING FAMILY (AMIR, PRIME MINISTER, HEIR APPARENT/ MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTER) OCT. 24. AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING, THE AMIR ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO ACT AS HIS TRANSLATOR, A ROLE WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER BEGAN BUT WHICH RAPIDLY WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THAT OF SPOKESMAN FOR THE GOB AS THE AMIR PARTICIPATED ONLY OCCASIONALLY IN THE RESULTANT DIALOGUE. PRIME MINISTER TOOK NO PART EXCEPT TO RESPOND TO CLEMENTS' EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO VISIT WASHINGTON. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE HAD HAD TO RETURN HERE IN EVENT AMIR WENT TO LATER ABORTED ARAB SUMMIT OCTOBER 18.

3. AFTER INITIAL PLEASANTRIES WERE EXCHANGED BETWEEN CLEMENTS AND THE AMIR, THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTER'S INTERPRETATION, AND AFTER CLEMENTS HAS EXPRESSED HIS AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S AND RUMSFELD'S REGRET THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO VISIT WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS EARLIER IN THE MONTH, CLEMENTS RAISED QUESTION OF TENURE OF MIDEASTFOR IN BAHRAIN. THE AMIR ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE GOB. FOREIGN MINISTER PROCEEDED TO STATE THAT AT PRESENT TIME GOB HAS "NOTHING NEW" TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT BUT IT WOULD DISCUSS ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS WITH AMBASSADOR. AT CLEMENTS URGING, FOREIGN MINISTER THEN PROCEEDED FORCEFULLY TO SUMMARIZE GOB POSITION VERY MUCH ALONG LINES OF HIS RECENT MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON IN NEW YORK (STATE 246032). THE THRUST OF THE MESSAGE WAS THAT IN ABSENCE OF SOME "NEW FORMULA", WHICH NO ONE SEEMS TO HAVE FOUND, THE GOB MUST STICK TO ITS DECISION THAT MIDEASTFOR DEPART BHARAIN IN JUNE 1977. CLEMENTS, IN TURN, EXPRESSED REGRET THAT FONMIN SAW SITUATION IN THIS LIGHT, WITH WHICH HE COULD NOT AGREE, AND REVIEWED REGIONAL SITUATION AS VIEWED BY USG, STRESSING POTENTIAL INSTABILITY AND VOLATILITY IN PERSIAN GULF REGION FOR NEXT THREE YEARS AS SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN MOVE AHEAD TO CREATE VIABLE DEFENSE FORCES FOR REGIONAL SECURITY PURPOSES.

4. CLEMENTS STRESSED HIS SERIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT AT GOB ATTITUDE, WHICH

HE SAID SURPRISED HIM. FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED BY REITERATING GOB VIEW THAT "BURDEN" OF MIDEASTFOR MUST BE SHARED REGIONALLY. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE STATED THAT BAHRAIN HAD SOUNDED OUT REGIONAL NEIGHBORS OVER PAST THREE YEARS BUT THAT NONE WAS PREPARED TO PUBLICLY SUPPORT MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN. HE COMPLAINED THAT PRIVATELY THEY TELL THE BAHRAINIS THAT MIDEASTFOR'S CONTINUED TENURE IS ACCEPTABLE, AND EVEN DESIRABLE IN SOME CASES, BUT DECLINE TO DO SO PUBLICLY. BAHRAIN FEELS THE "LONELY BURDEN" OF HOSTING A GREAT POWER BASE IS TOO GREAT FOR IT IN THE ABSENCE OF OPEN REGIONAL SUPPORT. CLEMENTS POINTED OUT THE CONSTRAINTS ON SAUDI ARABIA IN VIEW OF

ITS WIDER ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND STABILITY. IT COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED PUBLICLY WITH MIDEASTFOR BECAUSE OF THIS BROADER ROLE WHICH THE USG UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED. EACH COUNTRY, HE POINTED OUT, MUST CARRY A DIFFERENT BURDEN. FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATED GOB VIEW THAT "BURDEN" MUST BE SHARED REGIONALLY. WHEN CLEMENTS AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT GOB DECISION FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT IT WAS AN UNHAPPY DECISION FOR THE GOB, MADE OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A "NEW ARRANGEMENT" WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF RELIEVING BAHRAIN OF SOME OF ITS BURDEN. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR SUCH NEW ARRANGEMENT BUT HAD NOT FOUND ANYTHING ACCEPTABLE. THE AMIR BROKE INTO THE CONVERSATION AT THIS POINT TO ASK HOW MANY YEARS EXTENSION THE USG WANTED. CLEMENTS REPLIED THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR A THREE YEAR EXTENSION TO BRIDGE THE TIME UNTIL LOCAL FORCES (I.E., SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN) COULD TAKE OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR REGIONAL STABILITY. AMIR STATED THAT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS COULD BE HELD WITH THE NEWLY-ARRIVED AMBASSADOR--TO WHICH BOTH CLEMENTS AND AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT TIME IS SHORT SINCE MIDEASTFOR MUST BEGIN TO REDUCE ITS PRESENCE VERY SOON. ADMIRAL CROWE SAID THAT JANUARY 1977 WAS THE DATE FOR THE INITIATION OF MIDEASTFOR STAFF AND LOGISTICS REDUCTIONS. CLEMENTS NOTED THAT IF MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE WAS NOT SEEN BY THE GOB AS BEING IN ITS INTEREST, THEN IT WOULD GO. "WE ONLY STAY WHERE WE ARE WANTED."

5. AFTER BRIEF PAUSE, CLEMENTS BROACHED ANOTHER APPROACH TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, ASKING HIM TO ENGAGE IN DIPLOMACY AIMED AT SECURING SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM BERBERA, IN EXCHANGE FOR MIDEASTFOR WITHDRAWAL FROM BAHRAIN. FOREIGN MINISTER, SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK, DECLINED, STATING THAT WHILE IDEA HAS SOME MERIT, SOMALI WAS NOT A GULF STATE AND, ALTHOUGH AN "ARAB BROTHER", NOT A VERY CLOSE ONE. HE COMMENTED THAT BAHRAIN AND MOST OF THE GULF STATES WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN BERBERA AND IN THE REGION BUT THAT

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THE WAY TO FACE THAT PROBLEM WAS FOR THE LITTORALS TO ASSUME THEIR OWN DEFENSE. KEEPING MIDEASTFOR DID NOT MEET THE NEEDS OF THE REGION.

6. CLEMENTS THEN ASKED IF THE GOB WAS STILL INTERESTED IN THE QUESTION OF THE HELICOPTER SURVEY. AT MENTION OF THIS, HEIR APPARENT/MINISTER OF DEFENSE, SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISA, SAID HE CERTAINLY WAS BUT THAT "HE HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO READ IT AS IT WAS EXPECTED SOMETIME SOON". CLEMENTS SAID HE HAD THE REPORT AND SEVERAL COPIES HERE HANDED OVER TO SHAIKH HAMAD WHO PROMISED TO STUDY IT WITH CARE. HE ELABORATED THAT AS A MILITARY MAN HE HAD TO RECORD HIS UNHAPPINESS AT THE LACK OF RESPONSIVENESS IN GENERAL AND SLOWNESS (ON SOME ITEMS) IN PARTICULAR OF THE USG TO GOB MILITARY NEEDS. THIS LED TO A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HIS FRUSTRATIONS OVER THE YEARS AT HAVING HIS REQUESTS FOR VARIOUS MILITARY ITEMS REJECTED BY THE USG. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE PROBLEM

OF DELAYED DELIVERY OF LAW'S WHICH IS A PROBLEM FOR DEFENSE FORCES. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE THIS TOPIC OF CONVERSATION "EITHER NOW OR AT ANOTHER TIME". CLEMENTS SUGGESTED THAT NOW WAS THE TIME AND, AFTER BRIEF AND OBVIOUSLY STAGED, "CONSULTATION" WITH THE AMIR, SHAIKH HAMAD INVITED THE ENTIRE GROUP NEXT DOOR, TO THE CABINET ROOM, TO PURSUE THE QUESTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT (SEE SEPTTEL).

7. AS THE PARTY LEFT THE AMIR'S PRESENCE THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO CONTACT HIM "RIGHT AWAY" FOR AN APPOINTMENT AND THE AMIR TOLD EMBOFF THAT AMBASSADOR SHOULD INDEED SEE PRIME MINISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE "WAS SORRY" AMBASSADOR'S FIRST SUBSTANTIVE MEETING HAD NOT BEEN ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY.

8. IN LATER CONVERSATION AMONG USG OFFICIALS ONLY, CLEMENTS SAID HE FELT POSSIBILITY OF EXPLORING IDEA OF ALTERNATIVE HOME FOR MIDEASTFOR WITH, SAY, OMAN AND UAE MIGHT NOT PRODUCE POSITIVE RESPONSE BUT MIGHT BE USEFUL TACTIC TO PURSUE IN ORDER BRING SOME INDIRECT PRESSURES ON BAHRAIN. HE SAID HE THOUGHT ADMIRAL CROWE MIGHT BE USED AS CHANNEL FOR THIS AND THAT AFTER HE, CLEMENTS, RETURNS TO WASHINGTON HE WILL DISCUSS THIS APPROACH WITH COLLEAGUES THERE.

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